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CAMBRIDGE FAMILY NEWS

Information, Support, & Activities for Families of Children Ages 0-6

January - February 2006

JOIN OUR FAMILY PARTNERS

And see our new shared space near Central Square

At our first Family Partners meeting on October 18th a small group of parents talked with Center for Families staff members about plans for family fun events and support groups.

We ask everyone who comes to our activities to give back to the programs you enjoy by sharing a couple hours of your time with the Family Partners. You can help by attending a Family Partners discussion gathering, volunteering to help with one of our Family Fun events, or assisting staff with any of our activities.

Join us at our next Family Partners gathering for good conversation, tasty treats, and a chance to see our new location and share your ideas! Childcare will be provided for parents who cannot otherwise attend. Call or email Jenn with questions and suggestions: 617-349-3002 or jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov.

Wednesday, January 11th, 6:00-7:30 pm

Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House

71 Cherry Street, Cambridge

Dinner and limited childcare provided.

Call 617-349-6385 to sign up in advance for childcare.



CENTER FOR FAMILIES DROP-IN PLAYTIMES

We bring toys, activities, singing, and snacks, you bring the kids and the fun. Bring your children (0-5) and come play with us. Adults must stay with the children. Call Luz at 617-349-6385 or Heather at 617-349-3003 for more information.

Mondays

Area IV Youth Center, 243 Harvard St.
10:00 - 11:30 am (begins in December)

Parent-Infant Drop-In Group

Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave. (rear)
12:30-2:30 pm (babies under 14 months)

Tuesdays

Fresh Pond Apartments, 364 Rindge Ave
10:30 am-12:00 pm

Gately Youth Center, 70 Rindge Ave. (rear)
10:00 - 11:30 am

Wednesdays

Area IV Youth Center, 243 Harvard St.
10:00 - 11:30 am (Jan. 4, Feb. 15, and 22 only)

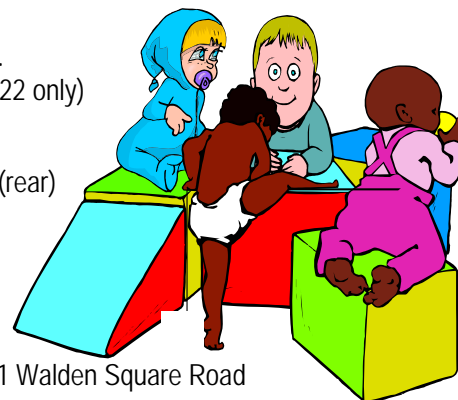
Thursdays

Gately Youth Center, 70 Rindge Ave. (rear)
10:00-11:30 am

402 Rindge Avenue
10:00-11:30 am (residents only)

Fridays

Walden Square Community Room, 21 Walden Square Road
1:30-3:00 pm



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PLAYING AND LEARNING

Mittens

by Nadine M. Jones-Ruffin



Mitten, mitten, who stole my mitten?
The washer? The dryer? The cat and the kitten?
Where, oh where is my mitten?

Parents: purchase many pairs of mittens. It is a fact that we lose our mittens many times over in the Winter. Mittens are better than gloves because the fingers have each other to keep warm.

Books to read on a wintry day

The Mitten

by Jan Brett

M is for Mitten:

A Michigan Alphabet Book

by Annie Appleford

The Missing

Mitten Mystery

by Alvin Tresselt

OUTDOOR WINTER FUN

Places to go sledding

Our thanks to Andrea Turtle of the *Turtle News* for these suggestions.

Cambridge: Fresh Pond Park. Gentle slopes for little kids. Bigger kids like the hills near the Water Dept. building. Danehy Park in North Cambridge also has nice hills.

Somerville: Powder House Park, near the rotary where Broadway, College Avenue, and Powderhouse Boulevard meet.

Lexington: Tower Park, opposite the intersection of Rte 2A and Rte 4 and 225. Also try the slopes near Hayden Skating Rink at Mass Ave. and Worthen Road.

Arlington: Robbins Farm Hill, near Park Circle. This big hill has several tiers and can be steep and dangerous. There are some gentler slopes. A lovely view of the Boston skyline.

Belmont/Watertown: Oakley Country Club, at the juncture of Trapelo Road and Belmont Street. A high hill with several tiers. If you start from the top, you'll get a good long ride. Beaver Brook off Trapelo Road is another great hill.

Brookline: Larz Anderson Park, Route 9 to Lee Street. Entrances at Goddard Avenue and Newton Street. The coasting hill is past the car museum, up near the skating rink. Also in Brookline: Eliot Playground has gentle slopes and Heath School has a steep hill.

Newton: The Charles River Country Club is popular. And the Newton Center Playground, off Tyler Terrace, has a nice little hill. There's also a popular sledding area near the Fessenden School off Waltham Street.



CENTER FOR FAMILIES NEWS

The Director's Letter

Winter is tough on families with young children. Just getting ready to go out is complicated by snow suits and mittens and boots. The more children in a family or group, the more challenging it is. But stay inside? "Cabin fever" makes kids jumpy and caregivers frazzled. In the winter, we encourage you to accept the challenge and get outside as often as you can, even just for a walk. Inside, help kids to have some active play time even in a small space: dance to different kinds of music, practice jumping on two feet or hopping on one foot, or see what it's like to crawl around like a cat or a dog for a while. And don't forget, we have drop-in playtimes in many locations where you can play with others. Come join us.

Jenn Kapuscik, Director



You love to sing, you love to spend time with
your family, you love to make new friends.
So don't miss Family Fun Night!

It's an evening sing-along for families with
children ages 0-6 years old with Cambridge's
fabulous singing librarians. Bring a picnic for
your family; beverages and dessert provided.

Friday, January 20th, 5:30-7:30 pm

King Open School, 850 Cambridge Street, between Inman
Square and Lechmere

(On-street parking only. Do not park in school lot.)

Call 617-349-6385 for information or directions.

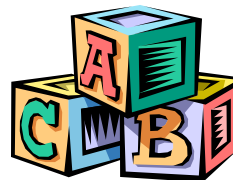
Save the Date!

The 5th Annual Caring for Babies Forum
March 18, 2006, 8:30 am—2:30 pm

Please Save the Date for the 5th Annual Caring for Babies Forum! The Caring for Babies Forum is a free event for all Cambridge parents, early childhood educators, and anyone interested in the growth & development of young children ages zero to three.

- Inspiring Keynote Address
- NEW Fun & Interactive Workshops
- Community Resources
- Networking Opportunities
- OCCS credit hours

Keep your eyes open—registration materials will be mailed in February. If you have any questions about the Caring for Babies Forum, please contact Melissa at the Child Care Resource Center at (617) 547-1063 x 237



THANKS

In honor of the New Year, the Center for Families would like to give thanks and praise to our partners in the Cambridge Community Playgroups and drop-in groups, and to the facilities that allow us to have our family functions at their sites. Without their support we would not be able to reach the multitude of families in the Cambridge community. Special thanks to Splendid Table caterer, **Ann Resmini**, for our nourishment.

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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Peabody School | • Moore Youth Center |
| • Fresh Pond Apartments | • Windsor Street Head Start |
| • Gately Youth Center | • Jefferson Park Head Start |
| • 402 Rindge Avenue | • Area 4 Youth Center |
| • Cambridge Housing Authority | • King Open Extended Day Program |
| • Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House | |

PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

MOMS' DISCUSSION GROUP

(Mothers of children ages 0-6)

Being a mom is challenging. You have to juggle your time and roles—mother, spouse, worker, learner. Take a break to think about your priorities, share with other moms, and talk about where you want to go. Snacks and limited childcare provided.

Facilitator: Suzan Wolpov

Saturdays, 10:00-11:30 am,

January 7, February 11

Center for Families, Peabody School

***You must call to sign up for childcare 617-349-6385 ***

PARENT INFANT GROUP

(parents with infants ages 0-14 months)

This informal support and discussion group at the Center for Families offers parents with new infants up to 14 months the opportunity to share experiences, ask questions, and meet other parents while babies sleep, eat, gurgle, or safely explore in our infant-toddler room. A second group at Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House will be starting soon.

Facilitator: Marie-Noelle Doucet

Every Monday, 12:30 - 2:30 pm **No Pre-registration Required**
Center for Families, Peabody School

DADS' MORNING OUT

(Fathers of children ages 0-6)

Dads and kids play together and then dads have time to talk.

Facilitator: Rick Colbath-Hess

Saturdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am

January 7, 21 and February 4, 18, 2006

Center for Families, Peabody School

***You must call to sign up for childcare 617-349-6385 ***

INFANT MASSAGE

(parents with infants ages 2 months - pre-crawling)

Massaging your baby gives you a wonderful opportunity to connect with your child. Massage can also help with digestion, sleep, and baby's health. Groups are meeting in the Peabody School, Walden Sq., Windsor Clinic. (for wic participants only)

Instructor: Marie-Noelle Doucet, CMI.

Call 617-349-3003 to sign up for the next session

THE RENAISSANCE JOURNEY

(single moms with children ages 0-6)

This 6-week evening group for single mothers focuses on creating a supportive community and caring for ourselves. Dinner and childcare are provided for this 6-week group. Please call 617-349-6967 for information and to sign up.

Facilitator: Nadine Jones-Ruffin

Next session will be in February 2006

Location to be announced

SCRAPBOOKING CLASS/GROUP

This monthly class for adults will give you tools and a chance to collect and preserve your special things. **Six sessions for \$90.**

Registration fee includes instruction, use of tools, crop talk lesson sheet, and a participant gift at each session. Albums, pages, paper, and adhesive are sold separately. Sponsored by Fitzgerald Community School.

Saturdays 9:00 am-12:00,

Jan. 14, Feb. 11, Mar. 11, Apr. 15, May 13, June 11

FAMILIES OF TWINS AND MULTIPLES

Come to the Center for Families for a Saturday afternoon play date with other families of twins and multiples. This monthly gathering is a purely social occasion. We'll have activities for the kids and snack will be provided.

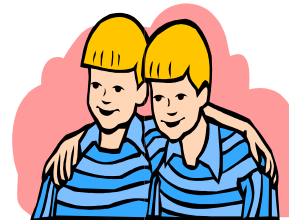
Call or e-mail Marie-Noelle to register,
617-349-3003-ext 2.

mdoucet@cambridgema.gov

Saturday - Jan 28, Feb 25

3:30-5:00 pm

Center for Families, Peabody School



PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES

EASY AND CREATIVE ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

This group for caregivers and children ages 3-5 years old, will expose preschoolers to arts and crafts so that they can use their fine motor skills and cognitive creativity to manipulate art objects and build a strong imagination.

Wednesdays, 12:00 - 1:30 pm

January 18 - March 1, 2006

Please call 617-349-6385 to sign up for this session.



JAGUAR DANCERS

  (parents & children ages 15 mos - 5 yrs)

The Center for Families will be offering one session of creative movement for young children and their parents in the winter.

Wednesdays, 10 - 11:30

January 11 - February 8

Area 4 Youth Center

Sign up by calling Nadine Jones-Ruffin at 617-349-6967

PARENT & CHILD RELAXATION YOGA CLASS

(for parent-child pairs together, children ages 3-6)

Discover and explore the joy of connecting with your child doing fun and relaxing exercises & games.

To register for the class and to arrange for childcare for younger siblings, please contact Marie-Noelle at 617-349-3003 ext. 2 or mdoucet@cambridgema.gov.

Facilitator: Marie-Noelle Doucet

Center for Families, Peabody School

Saturday, January 28 - 10:30 - 11:30 am

February 25 - 1:30 - 2:30 pm



Pajama Story Hour at the O'Neill Branch Library

Parents and children can come to the library in pajamas on the last Wednesday of the month to hear stories read by neighborhood parents and enjoy a snack before bed.

This is a great way to visit the library as a family. Bring a favorite book to share and discover new favorites.

Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 pm

January 25th, February 22nd

O'Neill Branch Library,
70 Rindge Avenue



CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUPS

Winter groups will begin in January. You must be registered to attend these groups.

Cambridge Community Playgroups are group activities for children and their parents or caregivers to attend together. Playgroups provide developmentally appropriate activities for children from 1 to 5 years old, including children with special needs. Winter playgroups will begin the week of January 2nd and run through the week of February 24th, 2006.

Each playgroup can serve a limited number of children. A lottery is used to make sure that everyone has an equal chance of getting into the group of their choice. Families from the waiting list are given priority. You can get more information by calling Nadine at 617-349-6967 or Michelle at 617-547-1063 x 271.

King Open School, 850 Cambridge St., Mondays 10:00-11:30 am

Windsor Head Start, 119 Windsor St., Mondays 2:30-4:00 pm

Moore Youth Center, 12 Gilmore St., Tuesdays 10:00-11:30 am

Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave., Tuesdays 3:30-5:00 pm

Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave., Wednesdays 10:00-11:30 am

Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave., Wednesdays 3:30-5:00 pm

Tiny Tots, Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave., Thursdays 12:30-2:00 pm

Jefferson Park Head Start, 280 Rindge Ave., Thursdays 3:00-4:30 pm



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

The Somerville/Cambridge WIC program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, referrals to community health care services, and nutritious foods for pregnant, lactating and postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five.

To be eligible for WIC, you must:

- Live in Massachusetts,
- Be pregnant; a breastfeeding or postpartum mother; an infant or child under the age of 5; or have a medical or nutritional need (risk), and
- Have an income that is at or below 185% of the poverty level.

Windsor Street Health Center, 119 Windsor Street, 617-665-3750

Office hours: Monday 8 am-7:30 pm, Wednesday and Thursday 10 am-6:30 pm, Friday 8 am-4:30 pm, and 1st and 3rd Saturdays 8 am-4 pm

North Cambridge WIC office, Jefferson Park, off Rindge Ave, 617-661-4084

Office hours: Thursday 8:30 am-6 pm, Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention (CSEI) runs inclusive parent/child playgroups that provide opportunities for children with a variety of strengths and needs to engage in developmentally appropriate play. Groups are open to children up to 3 years old. Families not enrolled in Early Intervention pay a fee based on a sliding scale.

Call 617-629-3919 for information.
CSEI, 61 Medford Street, Somerville



The Doula Program at the Cambridge Health Alliance offers drop-in support groups run by multilingual Doulas (birth and parenting coaches). The Mothers' Support Group meets on Wednesdays from 10-12 am and the Breastfeeding Support Group meets on Thursdays from 10-12 am. Groups are open to all. Call for more info: 617-665-1164

Cambridge Birth Center, 8 Camelia Avenue
(across from the entrance of the Cambridge Hospital).

Cambridge Public Library Programs for Young Children

The Cambridge Library is a great place for families. Call your local branch for information about storytimes and family activities. Remember that the library also has museum passes you can check out with your library card. For listings see www.cambridgema.gov/~CPL/ or call 617-349-4038.

Main Children's Room, (617) 349-4038

Mon. 11:00 am - Toddler Sing; Thurs. 11:00 - Toddler Story Time

Tues. 4:00 pm - Preschool Story Time (3+); Wed. 4:00 pm - Family Story Time (all ages)

Boudreau Branch, 245 Concord Avenue (617) 349-4017

Mon. 10:30 - Preschool Story Time (3-5s); Wed. 10:30 am - Toddler Sing-Along

Central Square Branch, 45 Pearl St. (617) 349-4010

Wed. 10:30 am Toddler/Preschool Story Time; Thurs. 10:30 am Toddler/Preschool Sing

Collins Branch, 64 Aberdeen Ave. (617) 349-4021

Tues. & Fri. 10:00 - Toddler Sing; Thurs. 4:00 pm - Preschool Story Time (3+)

O'Connell Branch, 48 Sixth St. (617) 349-4019

Wed. 11:00 am - Toddler Sing; Thurs. 3:30 pm - Stories and Crafts (3-7s)

O'Neill Branch, 70 Rindge Ave. (617) 349-4023

Mon. 10:30 am - Toddler Time; Thurs. 11:00 am - Preschool Story Time (3-5s)

Valente Branch, 826 Cambridge St. (617) 349-4015

Mon. 3:30 pm - Preschool Story Time (3-5s); Tues. 1:30 pm - Portuguese Story Hour (school age)



COMMUNITY NEWS

Kindergarten Registration for 2006 Register your child for kindergarten now!

Children who will be turning 4 years old on or before March 31, 2006 are eligible for kindergarten in the Fall. Cambridge has 12 elementary schools and you can schedule visits to as many as you would like.

Cambridge does their kindergarten selection by lottery and each parent can indicate their top three choices. Families who register by January 31st are part of the first cycle and have a better chance of getting their top choices, though families can register through August.

Parents can fill out applications and register their children any time starting in January. The Family Resource Center for the Cambridge Public Schools is located at 459 Broadway and their number is (617) 349-6551. You can also visit their website to download forms or find out information to set up a school visit at: <http://www.cpsd.us/FRC/CambFamRes.cfm>.

A CO-OPERATIVE BABYSITTING GROUP: ARE YOU INTERESTED?

About a dozen families expressed their interest in forming a babysitting co-op. group. We are choosing a meeting time for January. If you want to be part of this meeting, please contact Marie-Noelle Doucet to be on the list: 617-349-3003 x 2 or email: mdoucet@cambridgema.gov.



TIME TRADE CIRCLE

Men, women, singles, couples, and families of all kinds are invited to join the Time Trade Circle in Cambridge. The Time Trade Circle is a time banking club. Each hour of service that a member provides is banked so that they may get an hour of service in return from someone else. This is a great way to become connected and share your skills and energy with others in the community.

- The Time Trade Circle honors everyone's work equally. One hour of labor is exchanged for another hour of labor.
- Services can include cooking, home repair, childcare, yard work, listening, car repair, driving, computer help, cleaning, advocacy, and more.
- During meetings you will be able to meet with others and learn how your on-going needs and theirs can be supported through a collaborative of caring community members.

For more information, call Janice at 617-492-5951 or email timetradecircle@yahoo.com



Happy New Year

It's cold outside.

If you are worried about heating your home, learn about fuel assistance in Cambridge.

Contact the Department of Human Services Fuel Assistance Program at 617-349-6072.

CENTER FOR FAMILIES STAFF

OFFICE

Jenn Kapuscik

Director

jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov

617-349-3002

(English)

Center for Families

c/o Peabody School

70 Rindge Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

Office and Resource Room: Community Wing
(entrance at back of school)

Luz Hernández

Family Support Program Assistant

lhernandez@cambridgema.gov

617-349-6385

(English & Spanish)

Heather Searles

Family Services Coordinator

hsearles@cambridgema.gov

617-349-3003

(English & Spanish)

Nadine Jones-Ruffin, A.S., LSWA

Family Programs Coordinator

njonesruffin@cambridgema.gov

617-349-6967

(English)

Marie-Noelle Doucet

Infant Specialist

mdoucet@cambridgema.gov

617-349-3003

(English & French)

Fax:**617-349-6386****Web:** www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/families.cfmFunding for Center for Families Programs

The Center for Families receives funding from the City of Cambridge, the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), and the Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (CTF). Ours is one of 41 programs around the state that are part of the DOE Massachusetts Family Network and CTF Mass Family Centers programs. We also receive financial and administrative support from the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs, Cambridge Public Schools, and Cambridge Health Alliance.

The Center for Families serves families of children 0-6. Activities are open to all Cambridge residents.

**Center for Families**

c/o Peabody School

70 Rindge Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140